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TAGS: OPRC KMDR  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: THAILAND; ISRAEL AND PALESTINE; U.S.  
MILITARY SPENDING

TOPICS:

- 11. Thailand
- 12. Israel and Palestine
- 13. U.S. military spending

HEADLINES AND EXCERPTS:

11. Thailand

"Why will yesterday's peaceful coup will become today's bloodshed?"

The center-left Chinese-language Sing Tao Daily News said in an editorial (4/14): "The situation in Thailand is getting tense. Following the Thai government resorting to force to clear sites, protestors shed the first blood. The clash this time gives HK people a different impression from the peaceful demonstrations and coups in the past. It shows that social contradictions in Thailand have become more serious. The political situation in Thailand can no longer be understood with traditional wisdom.... Thailand has had elections for many years. And the country had always been under the rule of the traditional established power. The emergence of Thaksin had undermined this balance. In the meantime, he failed to obtain an overall control of the powerful. Thus, the seeds of this bloody conflict were sown."

"Compromise only answer for Thailand"

The independent English-language South China Morning Post commented in an editorial (4/13): "Thailand's battered image has been wrecked by anti-government protests that forced the cancellation of the weekend summit of Asian leaders in Pattaya. Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva had insisted the postponed meeting go ahead to prove his grip on power and the nation's stability. He has been left humiliated and the economy will suffer from lost trade, investment and tourism. The state of emergency that has been imposed and arrests of the organizers will not create calm; that can only come about through the rival sides talking to one another and reaching a compromise that leads to the restoration of genuine democracy...."

"Political struggles will check Thailand's development"

The center-left Chinese-language Sing Tao Daily News remarked in an editorial (4/13): "Following the challenge of the opposition party, the ASEAN meeting was forced to be cancelled. Thai government announced the arrest of the plotters. The situation in Thailand is getting more tense. The Hong Kong government urged Hong Kong people who plan to go to Bangkok to think about rescheduling their trip. The recent struggles between the two rival powers in Thailand - the 'yellow-shirted army' and the 'red-shirted army' - are getting more and more intense. Even though there has not yet been any serious

bloody clash, the image of Thailand has already been severely impaired and the government is getting weaker and weaker.... Even though the dispute this time can be solved peacefully, social differences will only be widened with the two conflicting powers in Thailand refusing to give in. If such a situation lasts for a long time, it will definitely weaken the long-term development of Thailand."

"Political crisis is disturbing Thailand, fragile economy adds troubles"

The independent Chinese-language Ming Pao Daily News had an editorial (4/12): "...Apart from political disputes, Thailand is also facing a fragile economy. The International Monetary Fund anticipates that Thailand's economy will contract to 4 percent. Stock markets of other Asian countries have gradually recaptured their losses from the beginning of this year. Thailand's stock index has dropped 1.4 percent. Foreign investors may not be willing to continue to invest in Thailand due to its instability. With the not-yet-over financial tsunami plus the continuation of political disputes, where will this Buddhist country go? It arouses much concern."

## 12. Israel and Palestine

"Peace talks between Israel and Palestine can hardly start now"

The pro-PRC Chinese-language Macau Daily News remarked in an editorial (4/14): "Palestinian leader Abbas called Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on April 12 to pass along his wishes on the Jewish Passover Holiday.... The telephone conversation between Israeli and Palestinian leaders on April 12 has a positive meaning: it shows that the two sides did not close the door for dialogue, despite some disputable remarks. To a certain degree, it may even show that the cool relations between the two governments have traces of a thaw since Israel launched the 'Operation Cast Lead' against Gaza at the end of last year. The future direction of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks will be determined by the pressure of the U.S., which has important influence, and the willingness of Israel and Palestine. Judging from the present situation, the relations of the two sides do not have the prerequisite to make any progress."

## 13. U.S. military spending

"U.S. adjusts its military spending and changes its strategy"

The pro-PRC Chinese-language Macau Daily News remarked in an editorial (4/10): "U.S. Defense Secretary Gates announced on April 6 the 2010 Defense Budget of the U.S., which suggested a significant reduction in spending on developing and purchasing expensive armaments. The spending that will be affected includes the most advanced F-22 fighters and the strategic missile defense system. The report suggests putting more resources into equipping for the needs of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a major adjustment of the existing structure of U.S. military procurement. It shows that the U.S. military strategy and tactics have huge changes.... At present, it is unlikely that the world will have any large-scale military conflict. The biggest problem that U.S. is facing is the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hence, the U.S. would rather reduce its spending on preparing for conventional wars with big powers such as Russia and put more into the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that the U.S. can quickly extricate itself from the difficulties."

DONOVAN